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HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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# THE MORAL TEACHING OF SUFFERING.

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“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”—Rom. v. 6-8.

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In the opening verses of this chapter it is said that we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but we glory in tribulation also,” bringing together the two great elements which move human nature—joy and sorrow. These twin forces have been, from the first, prime moral agencies in developing, educating and establishing the human race upon the spiritual plane.

The Old Testament appealed more to joy as the positive and primitive motive than to anything else. It employed sorrow as a threat; but there ran through its lyrics, its prophecies, and its formulas of worship, a mysterious element of suffering which then had no interpretation. Now, the New Testament discloses this mystery of suffering, and develops the germ of the Old Testament into a tree of life. It gives new and sublime views of the moral sphere and character of suffering.

It will be for another time to consider more in detail the interior action of sorrow without altogether leaving out the matter of joy. I wish to present in chief, to-day, a view of suffering as an interpreter of moral truth, and as a great moral force acting through the imagination and the



affections: What suffering works out in its subject—that is to say, how far the sufferer is himself perfected by suffering—is one thing. What cleansing and strengthening power it has, what its whole influence is in enlarging the horizon of a man's thought, the inward drill and education that it brings to a man's own personality—that is a thing which I have often discussed, and which I do not propose to take up now. But what power it has on the imagination and on the heart of men in the world, and what its relation is to the making of moral truths and principles supreme among men—that is a question which I have not discussed, and which I mean to discuss to-day.

The first step of human life, I need not say to you, is by the senses. It is to the life of the flesh that we are introduced by birth; and by that is meant simply that we are physical, animal beings. We are born of the flesh; we live by its appetites; and the higher life is gradually developed in us. There is no development, for instance, of hunger. That comes with us. There is no development of thirst. That comes with us, also. The blood throbs; and the nerves, though they be low in tone, and have a low function, have a function notwithstanding. But ideas come later. Emotions are superinduced upon this fleshly body and nature. And moral ideas and sentiments, which are highest of all, come latest of all.

It is a question, by what instrument this young animal is taught to be something more than an animal, socially, morally, politically and spiritually. What are the forces that are employed to develop the higher nature of man? The truths of the higher realm come slowly, and they come with difficulty. The ideas, for instance, of positive and intentional kindness, of obligingness, of courtesy, of self-denial, and of politeness—these never come of themselves. They are all introduced. There is some regimen by which they strike into the little animal's mind as it begins to be susceptible. The conception of such qualities as these is something separable from mere animal sensations. It is the developing of a higher life than merely one which seeks the pleasure of eating and drinking and frolicking.

The heroic forms of moral truths which rise still higher than these—truths of fidelity and love and self-sacrifice and faith and hope—these come still later, and with yet greater difficulty. So great is the difficulty of developing these higher moral truths in the soul, that when one is brought under the dominion and full experience of them he is said to have been really born again. It is a work which is equivalent to being born again, because it leaves one so different a creature from the animal that he was when he began.

Now, consider what it is in fact, in the actual experience of men, that most helps one forward toward the higher realm of moral truths.

In the family, parents being the teachers and ministers of God to their children, something is gained by intellectual instruction ; but you can go only a little way in explaining to a child simply by words things which are higher than its development and experience. Every parent knows how slow and difficult a process it is to go down to the child with higher ideas, and put them into that child's mind, so that he recognizes them, and feels them to be true. It would be worthy of a supreme artist and dramatist to be able to picture how conceptions which become fully developed in after life lie in the mind of a child—to represent what sort of pictures are made there. I have some reminiscences of my own in that direction, which I shall not go into, but which throw a great deal of light on the matter. The attempt to teach down on a child in such a way that it shall rise to a higher sphere, and to a higher line of experience, may accomplish something, but not a great deal. Parental example does more than parental teaching.

For instance, take such truths as those of self-restraint. You may teach a child what restraint means, and you may urge upon him motives of fear, of persuasion, or of reward for the act itself, by a blind and mechanical process. I was told when I was a child that I ought to govern my temper. Well, I always did when I was good-natured ; and I always lost it when I was not. When I was in my father's and mother's presence, for some reason more or less cognizable

to you all, I did restrain any great ebullition ; but it boiled inside.

I recollect distinctly, on one occasion, when I was not more than six years old, that a man of great violence of temper came to see my father, and rated him with such a scolding as I had never heard. I looked at my father with amazement, as he sat perfectly still and tranquil. When the man had done, and felt relieved, father began, in the gentlest manner, to say to him, " Well, if all you say is true, I think you are right in the severity of your remarks ; but I suppose that if in any regard you are not correct, you are willing to be set right." " Yes," said the man, with a growl, " of course I am." " Well, will you allow me to make one statement?" said father, humbling himself before the man. " Yes." So father began with a little matter, and stated it ; and then he went a little further ; and then a little further ; until, by and by, the man began to lose color, and at last broke out, " I have been all wrong in this matter ; I did not understand it." After he had gone away, father said to me, in a sort of casual manner, " Give up, and beat 'em." I got an idea of self-restraint under provocation, which I never could have got by all the instruction in the world which came to me merely in the form of ideas, and in picture-forms and fables. I had before me the sight of my father suffering—for his pride was naturally touched (though you might not think it from his posterity, yet there *was* pride in my father to some extent) ; he felt it keenly ; and under the keenness of the feeling he still maintained perfect calmness and perfect sweetness. He overcame the man by suffering. He suffered reproach and abuse, and maintained himself under them.

How much instruction would it require to bring a man to a full spiritual apprehension of what is meant by returning good for evil ! But if the child sees the parent, not doing it dramatically for his sake, but doing it incidentally and unconsciously, in the thousand disagreements that rise up in the neighborhood or in the household ; if the child sees the parent steadily returning good for evil under circumstances the most painful and the most poignant—then he understands



this high principle. It is the sight of a person who, though provoked and wronged, will not do wrong, but will return good for evil—it is the sight of such a person that strikes the deepest into the imagination of the child, and, if he ever comes to a like spiritual state, fashions in him early the measurements and possibilities of it.

The same is true in regard to restraining the appetites. To tell a child that he must restrain his appetites is necessary ; and yet other incidental means of drill and training are necessary ; but, after all, it is seeing others do the thing : it is seeing the process gone through with ; it is seeing an inferior feeling subjected to pain for the sake of giving emancipation to a superior feeling—it is this that makes an impression on the child's imagination.

The experience with strong-natured children is, I think, almost always this : that they are willful, that they are headstrong, and that they will have their way until they see suffering in their parents on their account. If the father be robust and somewhat obstinate, and if the boy is obstinate, the father's law rather provokes the boy. The father's imperious " You shall," or " You shall not," drives the boy inside of himself, but it does not subdue him. The thing comes almost to the point of rupture. At evening the mother, all sweetness and tenderness and gentleness, is found by the boy dissolved in tears. She is seemingly heart-broken. She talks to the boy, and says the same things to him that the father did. The command was right. The father enjoined it by imperious conscience. The mother suffers. In the one case the boy looks at the matter in the light of his father's sternness, and in the other case he looks at it in the light of the mother's suffering. By the one he is made more willful, and by the other more yielding. In the presence of the father he is stubborn and silent ; but in the presence of his mother he acknowledges his fault and his duty, breaks down, and rises up out of his lower and worse self into his higher and better self. The instrument which inflamed his understanding and imagination, and gave him new light on the point at issue, was the suffering of the mother on that very point.

So it is all the way through family training. Uncon-

sciously we are using all sorts of instruments for the education of our children. We inspire them by ideas and by example. We resort to coaxing—that is to say, we solicit hope and promise reward. We touch the spring of joy in every form. But, after all, one of the master influences that are acting in the family training is the fact that father and mother, when well endowed themselves, are capable of enduring care, labor and self-sacrifice, curtailing their own liberty for the sake of augmenting the benefit of the children. The glory of the father and the mother in the child's thought in after-life is not altogether the beauty of their attainments. There is something that goes deeper than that—the sense that the child himself has been wrought out by the sacrifices of the parent.

Can you raise up a more heroic idea in the mind of a generous nature than that of an old New England farmer, who never had a classical education, but whose boy seems to be so endowed with natural talents that he is determined to give him an opportunity to develop them? Between him and Nature on his farm there is a perpetual quarrel. Nature says that it shall be barren, and the farmer says that it shall not. He fights the winter, and it is ice. He fights the summer, and it is rocks. He earns but a pittance, and that by the severest toil before daylight and long after sundown; saving at the table, saving on raiment, saving everywhere, that he may gather together a little money to put his boy to the academy and the college. So the boy feels that every single dollar that he spends represents some suffering on the part of his father. The father never calls it suffering; for there is no generosity like that which love feels. Love never cares for what it gets; but, oh! how it rejoices in what it gives out! That poor woman, his mother, whose hands are like horn, whose face is scarred with wrinkles, who is slender and bent and homely—for twenty years how she has worked for that child, night and day! What tears she has shed for him! What hours of fatigue she has gone through, and what sickness she has endured in his behalf! How she has sought his highest good all the time without regard to herself! And when, at last, the boy has received his education,



and has entered upon public life, and is able to take care of these parents, what royalty there is in father and mother to his mind ! No king with a crown on his head ever produced such an impression as they have produced. Where persons have labored for you, and suffered for you, and done all they could to benefit you, the knowledge of the fact touches the bottom of the divine nature in you, and you glory in it ; and it measures not the magnitude of care alone, but the intensity of love. Love that will do and that will suffer—oh ! that is love enough.

Well, this is so in the sphere of the family because God made it so—that is, it is in accordance with the divine will. It is a part of the creative plan by which men are developed from a lower to a higher plane. Suffering is a midwife ; and it gives birth to better things in men. When it is vicarious—when it is suffering on the part of another for us—in one way it works in us, and in another way it works upon us ; but it works all the time.

Now, when you go out into life, there is a faint and general idea of the value of moral qualities. When boys and girls have been brought up in the household, and have had a certain sort of grounding in the rudiments of morality, and go out to fight the battles of life, there is a perpetual conflict between their higher and lower natures. They go out with a general idea of right and wrong. I think almost every young person enters upon life with a generous purpose. Very few persons go out meaning to be vulgar, or dishonest, or untruthful, or unfaithful, or selfish, or over-proud. Almost all the visions and day-dreams of youth are generous. The trouble is, with regard to almost all those elements with which they may have to deal every day, the young have no intense faith, by reason of having seen these elements made sacred by suffering. Men believe in truth, in fidelity, in friendship, in honor, in honesty ; but the conflicts and emergencies of life are all the time tempting them to sacrifice truth, and fidelity, and friendship, and honor, and honesty. These moral qualities never have great power over the imagination and over faith until they have been transfigured. Each one of them, we may almost say, must go through its hour of trial, and must be lifted

up and transfigured as Christ was in sight of the three disciples on the mountain-top.

For example, everybody thinks fidelity is a noble quality. In small matters everybody tries to practice it. It is only in over-mastering hours, when fidelity requires great sacrifice, that men shrink back from it. But when under such circumstances it is adhered to, the power of the example is tremendous.

Take the case of the pilot who died so nobly on Lake Erie. A precious freight of human lives was on board. The ship was on fire. All depended on his being able to carry the vessel to the shore; and he stood at the wheel, though the flames towered about him, and was literally burned to death. He chose to sacrifice his own life rather than to sacrifice his duty. And there was no man with a pulse of manhood in him who did not feel not only that there was something heroic in that man, but that there was something noble in fidelity itself—so noble that one might well long to be heroically faithful. Being borne up by a feeling of fidelity in the hour of trial—how noble that seems to one who has witnessed an exhibition of it!

Take the case of the engineer who, in that great disaster on the Shore Line Road, stood at his post, and gave his life deliberately to save the train. Take the case of the engineer who, above Northampton, in dashing against the rocks, was actually pierced through and through by parts of the engine, and who, so fastened that he could not get away, and while his bowels were literally gushing out, calmly gave directions to the men as to what should be done with other parts of the engine, filling his place of duty to the last breath.

Nobody can see such sights as these, and afterwards think of fidelity otherwise than in a noble light. How it is lifted up, and how heroic it is, when somebody has suffered for it, and when it has had somebody's life in it!

According to the old Roman legend, when it once became needful that a gap should be filled at the cost of a life, a patriotic citizen plunged himself into it to save the state. It may be true or false; but that makes no difference so far as the principle is concerned. To the imagination of the

ancients it was true. And no human power ever did so much good to the state as a citizen who could throw himself into a gulf that the state might live. The yielding up of everything for the sake of a great principle is the way in which God brings those airy, evanescent things which we call moral qualities home to our bosom and sympathy and imitation.

Do you ask who are the benefactors of the world? Almost everybody, a little. But who are the men that have raised the whole idea of human character? Who are the men that have made life noble above that which is animal and pleasure-life?

Take, for instance, those who suffered at the stake in olden times for their faith. Their faith may have been right or it may have been wrong; but any man, whether he be a heathen, a Christian, a Mahomedan, a Protestant or a Catholic, who, sincerely believing in any truth, is willing to die rather than renounce it, augments the dignity and grandeur of manhood. There is nothing that sings like a bird through all time, as does a heroic action.

When Grace Darling ventured, at her own peril, a woman, to save the lives of those who were strange to her, she not only saved their lives, but she raised the tone of heroism in the whole world.

When Florence Nightingale walked out of the accustomed sphere of woman's sympathy, and organized charity in a far-distant land, devoting herself with such assiduity to the good work that, ever since, by reason of her long-suffering and exposure, she has been an invalid—then she raised the conception of benevolence, philanthropy, fidelity and heroism; and it will never go down again. The example which she set has bred a thousand imitators. When I think what the magnificent heroism of women was in our war; when I think how zealously and efficiently they labored; when I think of their wide-spread charity, which was scarcely less perfect in its organization than the army itself, and by which relief was carried along the whole line of suffering—when I think of these things, I say to myself, “Behold what has been done because Florence Nightingale lived!”

When I think what has been done by kind men in regard



to prison discipline and the bringing back to manhood of men who have been degraded by crime ; when I perceive that we are humane, at last, in jails and prisons, I say, "See what Howard did !"

There comes in that great class of passages which represent Christ as suffering for the law ; and theologians, perhaps not without some excuse, but yet ignorantly and erroneously, have argued that Christ suffered for the sake of the ideal moral law of the universe ; that there was something in abstract law, hanging above men's heads, which required somebody to suffer for it. But the Scripture, going back of our conception of moral law, argued that the Jews under the old ritual law should accept Christ as the fulfillment of the law ; that in taking him thus they took him in an ampler form than they otherwise could ; and that thus in a sacrificial sense it was necessary for him to suffer for the fulfilling of the law. It is claimed that he bore the sins of men literally. That he bore our sins is true. I bear the sins of every man that I love and help. I, like every parent, bear the sins of my children. By sympathy and suffering I bear the consequences of their wrong-doing. I interpose between them and their suffering. That there is a larger sense than a figurative one of sympathy may be true ; nevertheless, in general, Christ bore our sins in this : that he put himself in such relations to us as that by his sympathy, by his love, by his suffering for us, he interposed between us and the dominion, power, and suffering of sin.

There are a great many who do not know how to get over the teaching that God poured out his vengeance on his well-beloved Son. They cannot endure the idea that an innocent person should have received the thunderbolt of divine wrath. They say that it was unjust and hard. To tell them that Christ was willing does not help the matter to their imagination. But you see that if the line of discussion which we have followed this morning be true, there is no foundation for any such representation as that God was angry with the world. When he declared that he so loved the world that he sent his Son to die for it, he made a disclosure of the Divine sympathy. Christ stood, not representing divinity in full

panoply, not representing God in his infinitude, but representing him in the flesh, restricted, and making manifest what was his interior nature, and interpreting him as a miniature interprets that which is larger than itself. He was a representation of the love of God, brought down to men in limited conditions. He was an interpretation, a manifestation, a disclosure, bringing to the human reason and imagination that which the world needed to know—namely, that the strokes of blind fate, that the cruelty of law, that the ongoing of penalties, did not represent the highest forces in the universe, but represented the constitution of things in the material and lower sphere. He made known to the world that there was a higher Power, that there was a nobler range of being, that there were other impulses and principles that disclosed themselves, by which the universe was governed. His mission was to reconcile men to God—not to reconcile God to men. He came to bring out a power which should cause men to lift up their eyes and see that whatever was romantic in love on earth, that whatever was faithful in affection in the household, that whatever sacrifice there was in love, that whatever there was of kindness and mercy, was the interior nature of God. There stands the Sun of righteousness, blazing with this one radiant interpretation: that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to die for it.

Now look at some passages, and see if I am leading you out of the way in this matter. Let me read again the text:

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Hear what the Lord himself says, speaking in the Gospel of John:

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

There is the measure of love. That is the purpose which the laying down of life is to serve. It is to be an interpretation of divine love.

Listen to what Peter says:

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”

He did not say that Christ suffered for the ideal or abstract moral law ; or that he suffered to rectify the moral sense of the universe ; or that he suffered in order that there might be an equivalent in his suffering for all the suffering that was threatened to man. In all the declarations of Christ's death mention is made of the divine love manifested in order to bring us to God. The death of Christ was to raise our conception of the grandeur of the moral qualities of God's nature, so that men should be drawn to them with an irresistible attraction.

In 1 John 3:16 the declaration is made even more strongly than in Peter :

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Thus it is brought right home to a practical application.

But it does not follow that there may not be other influences at work. I do not say that this ennobling of moral qualities, or this interpretation of God to the imagination and the heart, was all. What I say is, that it is all that is given to us. It is that side of this great transaction which shines down upon this world. And still, theology has occupied itself in developing the other and imaginary side, which may or may not be true. The New Testament makes known to us as the reason of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, its moral power upon the imagination and heart of man. It is not necessary to say that there are no other results of his death, but it is right to say that so far as revelation is made to us it deals with the ennobling of divine love by the spectacle of God suffering for the love which he bore to us. It was the more marvelous because it was God, and because he suffered not for friends but for enemies.

He who lifts up, by suffering, any single quality, and makes men feel, “I never could have thought of and never could have done anything so noble if it had not been for his example,” filling the world with an enthusiasm for a moral invisible principle—he who does that uses suffering divinely.



I think there is nothing more beautiful in the world than the story of Joan of Arc. It defies explanation—and indeed I never want to have it explained; for some stories, when you analyze them, cease to be stories, and become philosophies, as flowers, when you analyze them, cease to be flowers, and become scientific facts. Joan of Arc has thrown around heroism an inspiration which makes it richer and more glorious. I do not care whether she saved France or lost France—there may be some fiction on that subject; but she saved the world, and lifted that up many degrees.

John Brown was not, I think, a man to be admired in all respects; he was not a man whose wisdom was to be praised; he was not a man whose statesmanship was the best; but he was a man who, looking upon the sufferings of others, felt that his whole life was good for nothing to him except as an offering to them. And he did offer his life to them; and when it was accepted, and he was led forth to the sacrifice, he kissed a little child. He would not take regulation prayers, but he was glad to have poor slave mothers pray for him. He looked upon the farms and hills as he passed by them, and said, "Oh, how beautiful they are!" He went to death as men usually go to a banquet. And all this was not for himself, but for others. He saw men who could not speak for themselves, nor lift up their manacled hands for themselves; and he suffered for them. Whatever the mistakes of his judgment were, he meant to give liberty to those who were in bondage, and manhood to those who were chattels; and he gave his life to do it. And as our soldiers went through the States singing,

"John Brown's soul is marching on,"

John Brown's name will travel through the ages as an illustrious example of what a man may do who is willing to suffer for a great principle or a great sentiment.

Looking, then, at suffering, it may be considered a penalty in thousands of cases; and that is its lowest range, and is most frequent; and under such circumstances it may be regarded as a personal drill or exercise. But when it rises to the higher sphere, and becomes an example, a moral witness, an aspiration, a heroism, it has gained a prophetic place, and

stands between God and man, making known from God the higher truths to man in such a way as nothing else can declare them to him. That a life is greater than a death I do not doubt ; and yet, as men are made, dying produces an effect of moral greatness more than any living does. It touches the senses. Though they constitute the weak side of human nature, nevertheless that is the side that must be touched. We know that Christ ever liveth to make intercession for those who seek the heavenly land ; this is a glorious truth ; and there is more in such living than in simply dying ; and yet, the story of the death of Christ has touched the world, and will touch it to the end, as no story of living can. The life of Christ was sweeter, was more fruitful in events, and touched more sides of visible human nature, than his death ; and yet there is no thought of his life that thrills the imagination, that stirs you up in your nobler feelings, as does the story of his death. For suffering, by the divine constitution, has a power which nothing else has to inspire enthusiasm in men, when it is disinterested, heroic, for others, and not for one's self.

Hence the symbols of sacrifice and of suffering in the Old Testament, and the interpretations of symbols by the life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ as represented in the New Testament, all proceed upon that deep underlying principle which philosophy has not found out, but which was embodied in the whole moral system of the Old Testament and the New ; and they were an argument for the inspiration of Scripture long before there was a philosophy in the world. Proceeding on empirical grounds, that was a principle which struck the foundations of the human soul in the most potent manner.

In view of this exposition, I remark, first, that all who are embarrassed and tried in regard to the necessity of the suffering which fell on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ may find rest in the simple exposition of the New Testament. It was necessary that he should suffer, it is said. It is held that the law required that he should suffer. This was a local and national argument. It is only historically applicable to us. For, when the Jews, by long training, had been at last,

by stroke upon stroke, hedged in to their own system, and made obedient to it, there came preachers to them, saying that they should accept the Lord Jesus Christ as they understood him, rather than Moses and the Mosaic economy; and they, by the force of habit, and by the impulse of moral feeling, said, "We will not abandon our faith." "But," said the apostles, "it is not abandoning your faith to follow Christ: it is fulfilling it. All that the law means by its sacrifices and observances is fulfilled or represented in a living form in him. And when you take him you take the law, not as a dead letter, not as a sacrificial formula, not as the blood of bulls and goats literally: the shedding of his blood for the remission of sins, the cruelty and suffering which he endured, are typified by the blood of beasts in the Old Testament dispensation." The fact that Christ died for the world has an effect on the moral sentiments and the imagination. The great sacrificial elements of the Old and New Testaments take hold of the minds of men.

When you mechanicalize this, and look upon it as a merchant does upon a bargain, as though God gave so much for so much, it seems to me that degradation has entered into the sanctity of moral qualities, and I feel humiliated.

If this general idea is true, I remark again, you can see how a man's life may be lost and yet saved, and saved and yet lost.

There is a circumspect and cautious life and economy of disposition. Men are capable of living on a comparatively low plane of morality.

Never expend yourself any more than is necessary in order to maintain a sort of symmetry and consistency and safety of life, and go evenly through the world, and die in the mild regard of the neighborhood, and be forgotten speedily! Persons who do this are oftentimes much praised as being good citizens—and they are good citizens on a very low plane. But we find in the Word of God intimations of a heroism which is a very different thing.

"He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

He that does not care for safety; he that does not care for friends; he that is so fired with purity, with a sense of the



dignity of truth, of fidelity, of faith, of hope, and of love; he who, in view of any great moral quality, is willing to sacrifice himself that he may become a witness to it—that man really uses his life for that moral quality, and so for Christ's sake. One act of heroism is better than a thousand years of talking about heroism would be.

If Kossuth had staid at home, and yielded to the demands that were made upon him, and looked out for himself, he might have been worldly prosperous, he might have been popular, and he might have been courted; and he would have been hastening on to oblivion, like many of his contemporaries. But he preferred to expatriate himself; and he has been wandering up and down in the earth ever since, without home and without means. He has refused charity, though he has been so poor that he has seen his household dissolving about him. He would not take amnesty, nor go back to his native country, but he has dedicated his life to solemn testimony against oppression and in favor of liberty. And no crown on earth is to be compared with the glory which is already covering his brow. There are few men who have lived so much as he. There are few men who have sown their life so that it shall bring forth such seed in any generation as his will. I loved him when he was here; and I revere him now that he is gone. Human nature is larger for his living.

This is not a subject open for curiosity only; it is not a subject simply for admiration or for sympathy: it is a subject which comes very close home for examination to every one of us.

What are our lives? On what points do they center heroically? Where are we willing to stand and suffer for the sake of principle? Where are we willing to show forth the divine nature? What thing are we making more luminous? What quality is being made by us more desirable in the eyes of men?

If we go into the various conflicts of life with a low feeling, with the thrift-feeling, with a feeling of economy; if we enter upon worldly affairs with equivocation and falsehood for the sake of making and saving money; if we yield up truth

and honor and manhood for self—then we vulgarize principle. But if a man can stand in the midst of trouble, and say, “Come what may, truth and honor shall not depart from me;” if a man can in the sight of all who are around him yield bodily ease, yield pride, yield vanity, yield everything but fidelity to truth and honor and friendship—that man is preaching Christ, though he may not know the church, and though he may not know what he is doing. I hope in God that there is many a man who is feeling Christ like the man who was healed, who was cast out of the temple for his faithfulness to his Healer, and was found of Christ. The Savior said to him, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” “Who is he, that I might believe on him?” said the man—and he was talking with him face to face; and his heart was open and ready to receive him.

I think there are hearts standing in such sympathy with the heart of Christ that if they knew what it was that was moving upon them, if the film or veil between them and the Saviour could be dropped, they would cry out, “My Lord! my God!” And there be many and many Christians who carry the name of Christ blazoned on their foreheads, and have not his spirit, and are not witnessing for him by suffering or self-sacrifice. They dishonor that name; they tread upon it; they humble it; they break the faith of man in it.

A hundred men who could not be made to sacrifice truth, who could not be made to fall from duty, who would cheerfully accept suffering; a hundred men who should be as heroic as Christ was, would lift the world, at one impulse, clear through a hundred degrees of excellence. We need again, not only the Sufferer, Christ, in us, the hope of glory, but Christ in us glorious by making us willing to suffer.

Now you have light thrown upon the apostles’ experience, who counted it all joy when they fell into temptations and trials, and who rejoiced in infirmity.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, our heavenly Father, moved by thy Spirit. For how should we think of thee, or lift ourselves above the influences that darken and hold us down to the earth through the flesh, but by the quickening power of thy Spirit? We rejoice that these thoughts which rise spontaneously to thee are answers to thy call, and that we have in thee evidence of our adoption, and evidence of thy calling, of thine influence, and thy disposition. We rejoice to think of thee as the Father of our spirits. We rejoice to think that all our dispositions are to thee as the dispositions of our children are to us; and that thou art living and governing, not in supreme selfishness, and not to work out thine own glory as separated from the happiness of every other one, but that thou art the Lord and the Father of all, and art rearing generations and perfecting them, that they may be presented without blemish or spot before the throne of thy Father, and enter upon the inheritance of eternal perfectness.

We beseech of thee, O Lord our God, that thou wilt not be discouraged with us, with our slowness, with our selfishness, with our disobedience, and with our oft turning back. Grant unto us that persuasive influence of thy Spirit which shall hold us more constantly to the things that we know to be right, and which shall work mightily in us against the things that are wrong, overcoming easily besetting sins, pushing aside, by the power of God that is in us, vehement temptations, delivering us from the thrall of fear, and inspiring us with holy courage, and with an enterprise for things that are true and pure and good.

And now, we beseech of thee that thou wilt draw near to every one in thy presence according to the thing that is uppermost: to those that are in distress by reason of their sinfulness; to those whose consciences oppress them and cloud their souls with guilt. Will the Lord speak forgiveness of their sins and peace unto them. Grant that the way in which they may lean upon thee for justification may be made plain to them. May they trust thee, and not their own goodness. May they rejoice in the righteousness of Christ, which is made perfect for them.

We pray for all those who are in the midst of darkness and distress of mind by reason of sickness, by reason of bereavements, by reason of great losses, by reason of inward sorrows. O Lord, thou knowest how to weep with those who weep. Thou art in sympathy with the stricken. Thou thyself didst love, and thou knowest the mortal anguish of those who are bereaved. Look with compassion upon them, remembering not only thine earthly sufferings, but thy life, that carries with it eternal sympathy, and succor, and kindness, as the loving Saviour.

We pray that thou wilt grant to those who are borne down by cares and burdens which gird them and harass them, that divine strength which shall make all burdens light—for if thou dost put thine arms under us, though the world were laid upon us we could bear it; but without thee how quickly our faith goes! Our courage is as the summer brook without thee. So grant to those who are weary and heavy laden that peace and rest which is promised unto them.



We pray that thou wilt give light to those who are perplexed. Remember parents that know not what to do with their children. Remember those who know not the path in which they should walk. Grant that they may have such a sense of the presence of God, and such a trust in the reality and helpfulness of divine providence that orders every day things aright, that they may be able to walk with composure. Even if they suffer, may they be able to say, "Though he slay me yet will I trust him."

We pray that thou wilt grant to those to whom the outlook of life is dark, and who seem to themselves to have gone to the end of their strength, such a sense of God present with them that they shall be contented to stand, and to bear, and having done all things yet to stand. May there be that rest in God's goodness and power and wisdom and presence which shall help all classes and conditions in the various emergencies of life.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who are in this congregation; upon all those who are far from thee, and who do not feel the need of God; upon all those whose prosperity hath blinded them, or who are sinfully separating themselves from God's dominion. We pray that they may be brought to a nobler sense of duty, and to a higher conception of their inward and spiritual need. Grant, we beseech of thee, that they may have the power of God poured upon them, and that they may live a new life, and experience those higher joys which are heavenly and divine.

We pray for thy blessing to rest, this day, upon all thy worshipping servants of every name and everywhere. May those who preach the gospel of Christ speak in simplicity and sincerity, with light from on high. And we pray that they may have power given them by which they may be able to do good to those to whom they speak.

We pray that thou wilt lead this great nation aright. More and more purge away its ignorance, its corruptions, and all its attendant evils in its career of great prosperity. We pray that thou wilt grant that it may be temperate, forbearing, patient; and that it may set an example to men of wisdom in law, of obedience thereto, of great nobleness and humanity, so that men shall believe that we are free, and that society is free by the cleansing power of religion, which is nobler than all authority, and all compressions by the hand of despotism.

We pray that thou wilt hold us back from violent passions, and from all their outgoings into war. Grant that this nation may be an example of humanity. May it seek justice by forbearance, by ways of peace, and compass the ways of humanity by the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray, O God, that thou wilt send the light and the truth abroad in all the earth. Oh that thou wouldst hasten the day when Jesus Christ shall fulfill thy predictions, and shall reign over the earth. Let that new heaven come, and that new earth in which dwelleth righteousness.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son and Spirit.  
*Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

OUR Father, we pray that thou wilt give us an understanding of the inward nature of the truth. Grant unto us such sympathy with thee that we may know the nature of Christ, and that we may feel the full power of Christ's example and love in us. Art thou not preparing to make thyself more conspicuous? Hast thou not come down through the ages? and hast thou not throughout the ages been bearing fruit which yet shall be disclosed? O Lord, come. Fill the earth with thy power. Behold the passions of men. See what darkness is upon the flood and upon the mountain. See what midnight is in the human soul. O thou Deliverer and Emancipator, come and break open prison doors, and strike off shackles, and cause to be lifted up the voice of righteousness and of triumph. Come as a Conqueror. Come to lead thy people from conquering to conquer. And to thy name shall be the glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

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